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know what poetry is. Both classes of inquirers may be easily instructed by Robertson. Here are two definitions: "Poetry is the natural language of excited feeling;" "Poetry is the indirect expression of that which cannot be expressed directly." Formulas of this kind, if not wholly satisfactory are suggestive. The best course for one who does not instinctively recognize the office of poetry or art, is to study poetry and art in their respective rhythmical and plastic forms, and there test the truth of their forms or ideas by experience. Art is the best introducer into the realm of poetry, because it exacts a subtle knowledge of forms; these serve us as the language of the eye. The noblest poetry is that which contains the most forms, objects that we are familiar with in nature and glorified subjectively, for instance, as in the similes of Homer, and in the magnificent scenery of Byron. Poetry and art began together in the hieroglyphical symbols of the Egyptians; a misconception of the nature of ideas has converted poetry, in these latter days, into abstractions, "baseless as the fabric of a dream." Our civilization may be superior to that of the Egyptians, but we are yet too much like the Egyptians, to dispense with hieroglyphic symbols of the infinite. For example:

An American writer tells us that in a certain town in America there is a statue of a sleeping boy, which is said to produce a singular feeling of repose in all who gaze on it; and the history of that statue, he says, is this: The sculptor gazed upon the skies on a summer's morning, which had arisen as serene and calm as the blue eternity out of which it came; he went about haunted with the memory of that repose—it was a necessity to him to express it. Had he been a poet, he would have thrown it into words; a painter, it would have found expression on the canvas; had he been an architect, he would have given us his feelings embodied as the builders of the Middle Ages embodied their aspirations, in a Gothic architecture; but being a sculptor, his pen was the chisel, his words stone, and so he threw his thoughts into the marble. Now observe, first, this was intense feeling longing to express itself; next, it was intense feeling expressing itself indirectly, direct utterance being denied it. It was not enough to *say*, "I feel repose;" infinitely more was to be said: more than any words could exhaust: the only material through which he could shape it, and give to airy nothing a body and form, was the imperfectly impressive material of stone.

From this anecdote we may understand in what sense all the high arts, such as sculpture, painting, and poetry, have been called imitative arts. There was no resemblance between the sleeping boy and the calm morning; but there was a resemblance between the *feeling* produced by the morning, and that produced by gazing on the statue. And it is in this resemblance between the feeling conceived by the artist, and the feeling produced by his work, that the imitation of poetry or art lies. The fruit which we are told was painted by the ancient artist so well that the birds came and pecked at it, and the curtain painted by his rival so like reality that he himself was deceived by it, were imitative so far as clever deception imitates; but it was not high art, any more than the statue which many of you saw in the Exhibition last year was high

art, which, at a distance, seemed covered with a veil, but on nearer approach turned out to be more deceptive resemblance of the texture, cleverly executed in stone. This is not the poetry of art; it is only the imitation of one species of material in another species; whereas poetry is the imitating, by suggestion through material and form, of feelings which are immaterial and formless.

Still further, and more to the point:

There is an element of poetry in us all. Whatever wakes up intense sensibilities, puts you for a moment into a poetic state; if not the creative state, that in which we can *make* poetry, at least the receptive state in which we *feel* poetry. Therefore, let no man think that, because he cannot appreciate the verse of Milton or Wordsworth, there is no poetry in his soul; let him be assured that there is something within him which may any day awake, break through the crust of his selfishness, and redeem him from a low, mercenary, or sensual existence.

Any man who has for a single moment felt those emotions which are uncalculating, who has ever risked his life for the safety of another, or met some great emergency with unwavering courage, or felt his whole being shaken with mighty and unutterable indignation against some base cruelty or cowardly scoundrelism, knows what I mean when I say that there is something in him which is infinite, and which can transport him in a moment into the same atmosphere which the poet breathes.

"High instincts," Wordsworth calls them,

"Before which our mortal nature  
Did tremble, like a guilty thing surprised :  
..... those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the Fountain-light of all our day,  
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing :  
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the Eternal Silence. Truths that wake,  
To perish never.

Other phases of the poetic element are illustrated in the following extracts :

I wish I could give to the working men in this room one conception of what I have seen and witnessed, or bring the emotions of those glorious spots to the hearts of those who cannot afford to see them. I wish I could describe one scene, which is passing before my memory this moment, when I found myself alone in a solitary valley of the Alps, without a guide, and a thunder-storm coming on; I wish I could explain how every circumstance combined to produce the same feeling, and ministered to unity of impression; the slow, wild wreathing of the vapors round the peaks, concealing their summits, and imparting in semblance their own motion, till each dark mountain form seemed to be mysterious and alive; the eagle-like plunge of the Lämmer-geier, the bearded vulture of the Alps; the rising of the flock of choughs, which I had surprised at their feast on carrion, with their red beaks and legs, and their wild shrill cries, startling the solitude and silence, till the blue lightning streamed at last, and the shattering thunder crashed as if the mountains must give way; and then came the feelings, which in their fullness man can feel but once in life; mingled sensations of awe and triumph, and defiance of danger, pride, rapture, contempt of pain, humbleness and intense repose, as if

all the strife and struggle of the elements were only uttering the unrest of man's bosom; so that in all such scenes there is a feeling of relief, and he is tempted to cry out exultingly: There! there! all this was in my heart, and it was never said out till now! . . .

Take an example from an expression of countenance, which may be poetical. There are feelings which cannot be spoken out in words; therefore the Creator has so constituted the human countenance that it is expressive, and you only catch the meaning sympathetically by the symbolism of the features. We have all seen such poetry. We have seen looks inspired. We have seen whole worlds of feeling in a glance; scorn, hatred, devotion, infinite tenderness. This is what, in portraits, we call expression, as distinguished from similarity of feature. Innumerable touches perfect the one: sometimes one masterly stroke will suggest the other, so that nothing can add to it. This is poetry. To such a look the addition of a word would have spoilt all:

"For words are weak, and most to seek,  
When wanted fifty-fold;  
And then, if silence will not speak,  
And trembling lip, and changing cheek,  
There's nothing *told*."

Poetry has an elevating influence. It breaks the monotonous flatness of existence by excitement. Its very essence is that it exalts us, and puts us in a higher mood than that in which we live habitually. And this is peculiarly true of modern poetry. A great critic (Schlegel) has said, that the distinction between ancient and modern poetry is, that the characteristic of the former is satisfaction, that of the latter aspiration. To the ancients this time-world was all. To round it with completeness, and hold all powers in harmonious balance, was their whole aim. Whereas, Christianity has dwarfed this life in comparison with the thought of an endless existence which it has revealed.

Whoever will go into any Gothic cathedral in the evening, knowing nothing of the connoisseurship of architecture, and watch the effect produced on his mind by the lines which wander away, bewildering the eye with the feeling of endlessness, and losing themselves in the dark distances, and will then compare the total impression with that produced by the voluptuous, earthly beauty of a temple like the Madeleine in Paris, will understand, without the help of any scientific jargon, the difference between the ancient idea of satisfaction, and the modern one of aspiration. . . .

Lastly, I name the refining influence of poetry. We shall confine our proofs to that which it has already done in making men and life less savage, carnal and mercenary; and this especially in the three departments which were the peculiar sphere of the poetry which is called romantic. Beneath its influence, passion became love; selfishness, honor; and war, chivalry.

The first of these, as a high sentiment, can only be said to have come into existence with the Christianity of the Middle Ages. All who are familiar with the Greek and Roman poetry, know that the sentiment which now bears the name, was unknown to the ancients. It became what it is when passion had been hallowed by imagination. Then, and not till then, it became loyalty to female worth, consecrated by religion. For the sacred thought of a Virgin Mother spread its sanctity over the whole idea of the sex. Christianity had given to the world a new object for its imagination; and the idolatry into which

it passed in the church of Rome, was but the inevitable result of the effort of rude minds struggling to express in form the new idea of a divine sacredness belonging to feminine qualities of meekness and purity, which the ages before had overlooked. That this influence of the religious element of the imagination on the earthlier feeling is not fanciful but historical, might be shown in the single case of Ignatius Loyola, on whose ardent temperament the influences of his age worked strongly. Hence it was that there seemed nothing profane when the chivalrous gallantry of the soldier transformed itself by, to him, a most natural transition, into a loyal dedication of all his powers to One who was "not a countess, nor a duchess, but much greater." But only think how he must have shrunk from this transference of homage, as blasphemous, if his former earthlier feelings had not been elevated by a religious imagination; if, in short, his affections had been like those of the Greeks and Romans!

We pass on to a heedful injunction:

Cultivate universality of taste. There is no surer mark of a half-educated mind than the incapacity of admiring various forms of excellence. Men who cannot praise Dryden without disparaging Coleridge; nor feel the stern, earthly truthfulness of Crabbe without disparaging the wild, ethereal, impalpable music of Shelley; nor exalt Spenser except by sneering at Tennyson, are precisely the persons to whom it should in consistency seem strange that in God's world there is a place for the eagle and the wren, a separate grace to the swan and the humming-bird, their own fragrance to the cedar and the violet. Enlarge your tastes, that you may enlarge your hearts as well as your pleasures: feel all that is beautiful—love all that is good. The first maxim in religion and in art is—sever yourself from all sectarianism; pledge yourself to no school; cut your life adrift from all party; be a slave to no maxims: stand forth, unfettered and free, servant only to the truth. And if you say, "But this will force each of us to stand alone;" I reply, Yes, grandly alone! untrammelled by the prejudices of any, and free to admire the beauty, and love the goodness of them all.

And conclude our extracts with the following:

If things seem to one man thus, and if they seem to another man thus, who shall tell us which is true and which is false poetry, and bring us back to a standard by which we may determine what is the judgment of human nature in its most unsophisticated mood? The tests are two. The first is feelings disciplined by nature, the second is feelings disciplined through the minds of the acknowledged great masters and poets. The first test I have named is feelings disciplined by nature; for, as in matters of art, there are a variety of tastes, it does not necessarily follow that there is no real test or standard of taste.

And, just as the real standard is not the standard of the mass—is not judged by the majority of votes, but is decided by the few—so, in matters of poetry, it is not by the mass, or by the majority of votes that these things can be tested; but they are to be tested by the pure, and simple, and true in heart—by those who, all their life long, have been occupied in the discipline of feeling: for in early life poetry is a love, a passion; we care not for quality, we care only for quantity; the majesty and pomp of diction delight us; we love the mere mellifluous flow of the rhyme: and this any one will understand who has

heard the boy in the playground spouting, in school-boy phraseology, his sonorous verses. And so, as life goes on, this passion passes; the love for poetry wanes, and the mystic joy dies with our childhood, and other and more real objects in life and business occupy our attention. After twenty a man no longer loves poetry passionately, and at fifty or sixty, if you apply to a man for his judgment, you will find it to be that which was his when a boy. The thirty years that have intervened have been spent in undisciplined feeling, and the taste of the boy is still that of the man—imperfect and undisciplined.

The other test to which I will refer is the judgment of the mind that has been formed on the highest models. The first test I have spoken of is, of course, nature seen and felt at first hand; the second test is nature seen through the eyes of those who by universal consent are reckoned to have seen nature best; and without these, it is utterly impossible that a man can judge well.

"These two things, contradictory as they seem, must go together—manly dependence and manly independence, manly reliance and manly self-reliance. Nor can there be given to a thinking man any higher or wiser rule than this—to trust to the judgment of those who from all ages have been reckoned great; and if he finds that any disparity or difference exists between his judgment and theirs, let him, in all modesty, take it for granted that the fault lies in him, and not in them; for, as a great poet interprets himself to us, he is himself necessary to himself, and we must love him ere to us he will seem worthy of our love." These lines are Wordsworth's, and of no man are they more true than of himself.

### THE ARTISTS OF AMERICA.

THE subjoined biographies are taken from the "New American Cyclopædia," a work designed to embrace within its scope brief notices of all persons, living or dead, who have gained eminence in this country in the pursuit of the fine arts. Those devoted to living artists are, we understand, in every instance made up from original materials, and may be relied upon as substantially correct. In some cases, as in the notices of Clevenger and Doughty, we should like to have had them ampler. As a Cyclopædia deals principally with facts, little more than simple narrative has been attempted, except in a few instances where the prominence of the subject seemed to call for some expression of opinion. Of several artists on the list, biographies appear now for the first time, we believe, and in all cases the narrative is brought down to the latest period of time. In the succeeding volumes of the Cyclopædia care will be taken to do ample justice to the rapidly developing art of the country, and the future notices are intended to be numerous and full.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON was born at Waccamaw, S. C., on the plantation of his father, November 5, 1779, and died at Cambridge, Mass., July 9, 1843. At the age of seven years he was sent to Newport, R. I., to be educated, and for the improvement of his health. While a schoolboy at Newport, he received encouragement to paint from a manufacturer of quadrants and

compasses named King, a portrait of whom is one of Allston's earliest efforts. Allston graduated at Harvard College in 1800, and then went to Charleston, S. C., where he commenced his artist life. He did not long remain at Charleston. Here he became intimate with Malbone, a noted miniature-painter of that day, and embarked with him for Europe, where he went to enlarge his professional knowledge. "Up to this time," he remarks, "my favorite subjects, with occasional comic intermissions, were banditti, and I did not get over the mania until I had been more than a year in England." Arriving in London in 1801, Allston became a student in the Royal Academy, and the following year exhibited three pictures at Somerset House, a landscape, a rocky coast with banditti, and a comic piece. In 1804 he visited Paris with John Vanderlyn, and after a few months' sojourn there went to Italy. During the period of Allston's first visit to Europe, he formed many valuable acquaintances, among whom may be mentioned West, Fuseli, Coleridge and Thorwaldsen. In 1809 Allston returned to Boston, where he married a sister of Dr. Channing. He went again to London soon after this event, where he finished and exhibited a picture called "The Dead Man Revived" (now belonging to the Academy of the Fine Arts at Philadelphia), for which he obtained a prize of 200 guineas from the British Institution. His next important works were "St. Peter liberated by the Angel," ordered by Sir George Beaumont (which picture is now in Boston), and "Uriel in the Sun," painted for the Duke of Sutherland, and for which he again received a prize of 150 guineas; "Jacob's Dream" was the last of a series of large works, the interval between the execution of each picture being filled up with lesser achievements. He returned home in 1818 in feeble health, and with but one finished picture, "Elijah in the Wilderness," subsequently purchased and taken to England by the Hon. Mr. Labouchère. During the succeeding twelve years Allston resided in Boston. Among the productions of this period, interrupted as were his labors by feeble health, the most celebrated are "The Prophet Jeremiah," now belonging to Miss Gibbs of Newport; "Saul and the Witch of Endor," purchased by the late Colonel T. H. Perkins of Boston; and "Miriam Singing the Song of Triumph," owned by Hon. David Sears of the same city. The most memorable of his smaller works are "Beatrice" and "The Valentine"—female ideal heads of great power of expression and color. In 1830, having a second time married, he fixed his studio at Cambridge, and here painted some most remarkable works, among which are "Spatatro's Vision of the Bloody Hand," now in South Carolina, and "Rosalie," an ideal subject belonging to Nathan Appleton, Esq., of Boston, and "Balshazzar's Feast," a work which he left unfinished at his death. Besides Allston's artistic productions, he gave to the world several prominent literary works. In 1813, during his second residence in London, he published the "Sylphs of the Seasons," a poem in which are pictured the phases of the four seasons and their effect upon the mind. Added to this work are "The Two Painters," an excellent metrical satire, the "Paint King," weird and imaginative enough to have proceeded from the most fanciful of German Bards; "Monaldi, a tale," a tragic story of passion, in which he turned to account his own observation when in Italy; and, finally, a course of lectures on Art, published after his death. Mr. Allston was a person of a tall, lithe figure, full expressive eye, broad and emphatic brow, with, in his later years, hair of long silvery whiteness. His aspect at once proclaimed him a remarkable character. (Abridged.)